MARY JANE & BLACK CAT

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MARY JANE WATSON and **FELICIA HARDY,** A.K.A. the **BLACK CAT,** are stuck in Limbo. Felicia went to help MJ and her family at the behest of MJ's ex and Felicia's current (secret) boyfriend, **PETER PARKER**, A.K.A. **SPIDER-MAN**, only to discover that MJ had powers of her own--though they weren't enough to prevent MJ and Felicia from getting pulled through a portal into the hellish dimension!

Now they've struck a deal with **BELASCO,** Limbo's former ruler, for passage back to Earth in exchange for braving the **SCREAMING TOWER** to retrieve Belasco's lost **SOULSWORD.** Inside the Tower, MJ and Felicia formed a shaky alliance with the demon **S'YM** and defeated the deadly tentacled Tower guardian. But when they went to retrieve the Soulsword, S'ym revealed that whoever touched the sword would be bonded to it, meaning that Belasco would have to kill the new owner to get it back. Felicia was prepared to sacrifice herself, but MJ wouldn't have it. Together, they concocted a plan that may yet get them home safely…but there's only one way to find out.

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CASTLE BELASCO, LIMBO.

SO...?

SO WHAT?

YOU LEFT THE SCREAMING TOWER.

I CAN ONLY ASSUME YOU HAD (AND CONTINUE TO HAVE) THE--*MY*-- SOULSWORD.

YOU WERE CONFRONTED WITH THE HORDES OF ENEMIES AWAITING YOU OUTSIDE.

"SO...

"...WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?!"

SIMPLE. WE FOLLOWED THE PLAN.

WE *FOUGHT.*

OR, AT LEAST, THAT'S WHAT *S'YM* THOUGHT THE PLAN WAS.

"SEE, WHEN YOU'VE GOT TWO *SWEET YOUNG THINGS* AND A *GIANT PURPLE DEMON...*

"...MOST PEOPLE FOCUS ON THE *GIANT PURPLE DEMON.*"

WE *DITCHED* S'YM OUTSIDE THE TOWER AS SOON AS THE FIGHTING BROKE OUT. HE PUT UP A *HELL* OF SCRAP, DIDN'T EVEN NOTICE US SNEAKING OUT AND AWAY IN THE CHAOS.

NONE OF THEM DID, NOT WHEN THEY HAD *BERSERKER BARNEY* ON THEIR HANDS.

WHY DO YOU *THINK* WE KEPT HIS DUMB ASS AROUND FOR SO *LONG?*

...
IS HE DEAD?
"HONESTLY?"
WHO CARES?
OH, BRAVO. BRA-VO, EARTH GIRLS!
ARE YOU CERTAIN THAT YOU MUST GO BACK HOME? BECAUSE YOU WOULD BE RIGHT AT HOME AMONGST MY DEMONS HERE.
ONCE I MAKE THEM MINE AGAIN, OF COURSE.
NOW. TO BUSINESS, DUCKLINGS.
WHICH ONE OF YOU HAS MY SOULSWORD?

WELL, BELASCO...

...THAT *IS* THE QUESTION, ISN'T IT?

YES--

--WHAT?

ARE YOU A ***GAMBLING MAN?***

YOU KNOW? BORN LONELY, DOWN BY THE RIVERSIDE? LEARNED TO SPIN FORTUNE WHEELS, THROW DICE?

BECAUSE YOU'VE GOT A ***REAL*** GAMBLE IN FRONT OF YOU ***NOW.***

WHY, MARY JANE, WHAT***EVER*** COULD YOU BE TALKING ABOUT?

WHY, FELICIA, I'M ***SO*** GLAD YOU ***ASKED.***

BECAUSE SURELY BELASCO KNOWS THAT ***WHICHEVER*** OF US ***DUMB EARTH GIRLS*** TOOK HOLD OF HIS SOULSWORD WOULD BE ***PERMANENTLY BONDED*** TO IT.

NOW, MARY JANE, ***SURELY*** BELASCO WOULD ***NEVER*** WITHHOLD ***IMPORTANT INFORMATION*** LIKE THAT.

WHY, THAT WOULD MEAN HE WOULD HAVE TO ***KILL*** THE BEARER OF HIS SOUL-SWORD IN ORDER TO TAKE POSSESSION OF IT.

I FEAR THAT HE *WOULD*, CAT.

WELL, I NEVER!

OF COURSE...

DO TELL!

HE'D HAVE TO *KILL* THE SOULSWORD'S BEARER *BEFORE* SHE COULD *SUMMON* IT. SHE'D BE TOO *POWERFUL* THEN.

BUT IF HE KILLED THE *WRONG* ONE, THE ONE *WITHOUT* THE SOULSWORD, THE *OTHER* WOULD *DRAW* THE *BLADE.* SO HE'D HAVE TO *KNOW FOR SURE.*

OR GET *LUCKY.*

AH, *LUCK.*

WHAT DO YOU *SAY,* BELASCO?

FIFTY-FIFTY. BETTER ODDS THAN YOU GET PLAYING THREE-CARD MONTE IN THE BRONX.

WHAT--WHAT IS HAPPENING?

FIFTY-FIFTY, BELASCO.

WHO'S GOT THE SOULSWORD? ME OR FELICIA?

WHO ARE YOU GOING TO TAKE OUT?

YOU LITTLE--

MANNERS.

TTT!

THE CAT...THE CAT IS MUCH TOO ***SELFISH.*** SHE'D ***NEVER*** MAKE A SACRIFICE LIKE THAT.

BUT THE ***RED*** ONE...SHE HAS TOO MUCH TO ***LOSE. SHE'D*** NEVER ABANDON HER ***PROGENY.***

EVEN ***IF*** YOU HAD A ***PLAN,*** SHE WOULD ***NEVER*** STAY AND RULE OVER LIMBO.

...BUT THE CAT ***COULD*** SEE HERSELF AS A ***DEMON-QUEEN.*** I'M ***CERTAIN*** OF IT.

YES.

OF COURSE. IT'S CLEAR.

GOODBYE, FELICIA HARDY.

SZZPOKK

NEVER ***FEAR,*** MARY JANE WATSON.

WHILE THE DEATH OF YOUR FRIEND IS ***REGRETTABLE,*** I ***WILL*** HOLD UP MY END OF THE BARGAIN AND SEND YOU BACK TO ***EARTH.***

OH, ***BELASCO...***

...LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT **REGRETTABLE.**

HOW

"THINKING LIKE A CROOK."

...LIKE YOU SAID.

YOU'VE GOT KIDS TO GET BACK TO.

FELICIA! I SAID NO.

DAMN IT, RED!

I'M OUT OF IDEAS HERE!

DON'T YOU GET IT?

WE'RE A *TEAM,* YOU AND I. I DON'T NEED YOUR ***NOBLE SACRIFICES.*** I JUST NEED YOU TO ***WORK*** WITH ME.

YOU'RE A CROOK. YOU GET OUT OF SLIPPERY SITUATIONS LIKE THIS ALL THE *TIME.*

THINK.

...

YOU'RE RIGHT.

WE'VE GOT TO WORK TOGETHER. WORKING TOGETHER IS WHAT ACED THE GUARDIAN, BROUGHT S'YM BACK TO LIFE...

AND IF S'YM HAD STAYED DEAD, WE'D NOT HAVE KNOWN ABOUT THE ***SOUL-SWORD*** AND THE ***BONDING***...

WORKING ***TOGETHER.***

THAT'S IT.

NEITHER OF US CAN TAKE THE SOULSWORD WITHOUT IT BONDING ITSELF TO US.

BUT WHAT IF WE ***SHARED THE LOAD?***

WHAT IF YOU USED YOUR JUICE TO ***SPLIT IT IN TWO?***

NOW ***THAT'S*** THE CROOKED THINKING I LIKE.

"WHAT'S TO STOP US BECOMING THE FABULOUS CO-QUEENS OF HELL?"

FELICIA ASKED YOU THAT, BEFORE.

TURNS OUT, THE ANSWER?

NOTHING.

THIS WAS ALL A *LIE*?

A *RUSE*?

WHAT ***REALLY*** HAPPENED AT THE BASE OF THE SCREAMING TOWER?!

YOU ***REALLY*** THOUGHT WE'D JUST LEAVE S'YM LIKE THAT?

YEAH. WE *LIKE* S'YM.

AND ***BESIDES...***

"...WE HAD TO TEST OUR SWORDS."

SHOULD HAVE *KNOWN BETTER,* BELASCO.

SHOULD HAVE KNOWN WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU MESS AROUND WITH *EARTH GIRLS.*

SHOULD HAVE KNOWN WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU CROSS THE *BLACK CAT* AND...

...WHAT ARE WE CALLING *YOU,* RED?

I'M NOT A *SUPER HERO,* FELICIA.

IF YOU WANT TO BE THE *RED CAT,* THAT'S FINE BY ME.

YEESH. REALLY?

SCARLET CAT?

COME ON.

CRIMSON CAT, THEN. IT'S GOT *ALLITERATION.*

FOCUS.

RIGHT.

...FINE. HAKK--I ADMIRE YOUR--*GAKKK*--NEGOTIATION STYLE.

I WILL SEND YOU BACK TO--*URRKK*--EARTH. JUST LEAVE ME AND MY SOULSWORD.

NEW...

...*GAKK*...

...*BOSS?*

I'D LOVE TO TRUST YOU, BELASCO. I REALLY WOULD.

BUT LET'S JUST SAY...WE HAVE ***DOUBTS.***

SO, YES, YOU ***WILL*** BE SENDING US HOME.

BUT ONLY BECAUSE YOUR NEW BOSS IS GOING TO ***MAKE*** YOU.

YEAH.

TIME FOR ***NEW*** LEADERSHIP AROUND HERE, I THINK.

WELL, ***MADDIE PRYOR'S*** NAME IS STILL ON THE LEASE...

...BUT I THINK IT'S ABOUT TIME LIMBO HAD AN *OPPOSITION PARTY.*

HIYA, BELASCO. I'VE GOT OUR SOULSWORD *AND* YOUR SOUL-COMPASS.

SO I THINK FROM *HERE ON OUT...*

...YOU'RE *MY* MINION.

OH NO

SHORTLY.

YOU'RE *SURE* YOU DON'T WANT TO STAY?

YOU'D MAKE A HELL OF A PAIR OF DEMONS.

NOPE. WE BOTH, *ERR*, WELL...

WE'VE BOTH GOT PEOPLE TO GET BACK TO, S'YM.

THANKS, THOUGH.

FAIR ENOUGH.

GUESS IT'S A BIT RISKY HAVING SO MANY EARTH GIRLS AROUND ANYWAYS. LIKE ASKING FOR TROUBLE.

ALL RIGHT, SPELL-MONKEY! HOP TO!

RRRNN!

AND NO FUNNY STUFF!

ENJOY THIS, S'YM. ENJOY THIS, BLACK CAT, MARY JANE WATSON, ***ALL OF YOU.***

BECAUSE I WILL ***NOT*** FORGET THIS.

I ***WILL*** BE REVENGED ON ***ALL THREE*** OF YOU, HOWEVER LONG IT TAKES.

*AND I AM **IMMORTAL**, WITH **ENDLESS** TIME TO CONTEMPLATE MY VENGEANCE.*

SORRY, BELASCO, I DIDN'T GET THAT--I DON'T SPEAK "WHINY LOSER."

SEE YOU IN HELL, BABY!

YOU READY?

GOD, YES. YOU?

YEAH. LET'S GO.

YOU SMELL THAT?

I SMELL *SOMETHING.*

SOGGY GARBAGE--

--MYSTERIOUS UNDERGROUND STEAM--

--THE COOKING OF PAST-BEST-BY HOT DOGS...

THAT'S *NEW YORK CITY!*

WE'RE *HOME!*

SUPER COOL.

WE'RE KIND OF MAKING A *SCENE* HERE. CAN YOU GET ME *HOME* SO I CAN SEE WHAT THE HELL'S HAPPENED TO *PAUL* AND THE *KIDS?*

OH.
RIGHT.
SO, TO BE CLEAR--WE'RE COOL?
FOR GOD'S SAKE.
WE'RE COOL. WE'RE FINE. YOU AND ME, WE'LL GET DRINKS NEXT WEEK, I PROMISE.
BECAUSE YOU AND PETER HAVE A *HISTORY.* AND IT'S ONLY BEEN *SIX MONTHS.*
HERE'S THE THING, FELICIA. AND I'M NOT GOING TO GET INTO IT ANY MORE THAN THIS: THAT'S WHERE YOU'RE WRONG, EVEN IF IT SEEMED LIKE THAT TO *YOU.*
IT WAS A LOT LONGER THAN SIX MONTHS.
NOW. WHERE ARE MY KIDS?
MOMMY!

YEAH, IT'S MOMMY ALL RIGHT. AND I *MISSED* YOU.

WHERE *WERE* YOU?

SOMEPLACE *REALLY* WEIRD. BUT I'M *BACK.* AND I'M *OKAY.* AND I'M NEVER GOING TO LEAVE YOU AGAIN IF I CAN *HELP* IT.

COME ON, COME SAY HI TO AN OLD FRIEND OF MINE.

THIS IS FELICIA.

SHE'S THE BLACK CAT.

END.

FOR MORE MARY JANE AND BLACK CAT, CHECK OUT...

The AMAZING SPIDER-MAN

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